

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 81

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 2

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 81—Relative to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 5, 2008.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 81, Price. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

This measure would honor the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and commemorate the observance of his birthday, January 21, 2008, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.

WHEREAS, Renowned civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born in Atlanta, Georgia, on January 15, 1929; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., received his bachelor of arts degree in sociology from Morehouse College; in 1951, he received his bachelor of divinity degree from Crozer Theological Seminary, as valedictorian and student body president; and in 1955, he was awarded a doctorate in systematic theology from Boston University; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King married Coretta Scott on June 18, 1953; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King was ordained pastor of Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1954; and

WHEREAS, Five days after Rosa Parks' arrest for refusing to comply with segregation on buses in Montgomery, on December 5, 1955, Dr. King was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott began; and

WHEREAS, During the boycott, Dr. King gained national prominence as an exceptional leader with extraordinary oratorical skills and personal courage; and

WHEREAS, On December 20, 1956, the United States Supreme Court declared Alabama's segregation laws unconstitutional, and Montgomery buses were desegregated; and

WHEREAS, In 1957, Dr. King and other southern African American ministers founded the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and elected Dr. King as their president; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King led the 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom in Washington, D.C., and subsequently published his first book, *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*; and

WHEREAS, In 1959, Dr. King toured India, where he learned more about Gandhian strategies of nonviolence and developed his own theories about achieving social change through nonviolent resistance; and

WHEREAS, During mass demonstrations in 1963 organized by Dr. King and his staff in Birmingham, Alabama, images of brutality inflicted on African American demonstrators by police using police dogs and firehoses shocked the world; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech on August 28, 1963, at the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom”; and

WHEREAS, Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, in 1964, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted as a direct result of his efforts; and

WHEREAS, In 1965, Dr. King led the march from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the first Voting Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, On April 4, 1968, while in Memphis, Tennessee, assisting striking sanitation workers, Dr. King was assassinated; and

WHEREAS, United States Representative John Conyers introduced legislation in Congress four days later proposing Dr. King’s birthday as a holiday; and

WHEREAS, On April 10, 1970, California became the first state to pass legislation making Dr. King’s birthday a school holiday; and

WHEREAS, Despite resistance to the creation of a new national holiday, the diligence and perseverance of United States Representative John Conyers and numerous others in pursuing this goal culminated when on November 2, 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed legislation making Dr. King’s birthday a national holiday; and

WHEREAS, January 20, 1986, marked the first observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day; and

WHEREAS, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., devoted his life to fight segregation and injustice by nonviolent means, and is an outstanding example of courageous leadership in the face of unrelenting violence and harassment by individuals and government institutions; and

WHEREAS, The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., is a source of inspiration for all Americans; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature of the State of California honors the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and commemorates the observance of his birthday, January 21, 2008, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Day.